

Statement of Best Practices for the use of Academic Analytics at USF

Academic Analytics (AcA) provides data for research/scholarly activity benchmarking and discovery by collecting publicly available scholarly data (including publications, citations, and external funding) on individual faculty members, combining the data by Ph.D. program or medical specialty, and comparing it to equivalent information from similar programs in the same disciplines at other universities. Access to these data is provided through an online dashboard that is password protected and available only to approved users. AcA also enables examination of data by individual faculty members, provides a research/scholarly activity profile for each faculty member, and depicts their collaborative network. Because data on individual faculty members is present within the dashboard, it is essential that the policies on using this data carefully specify who has access and for which purposes. The principles articulated below will guide the use of AcA within the University of South Florida (USF) to examine research/scholarly activity productivity and integrate this data with additional sources of information.

Decisions should be made by people, not solely by data. Data-informed decision-making should include both quantitative and qualitative information from a variety of sources and experiences. Academic Analytics is a tool and the information provided is best utilized in conjunction with:

(1) additional relevant campus-based and university data;

(2) other analytical tools; and most importantly

(3) the collective knowledge and understanding of institutional users to contextualize this information.

As such, Academic Analytics is not designed for summative evaluative purposes, as it can't possibly take into consideration everything you would need to consider.

Rather, Academic Analytics is best used for formative/generative purposes.

With the newer discovery tools now available to complement the comparative tools, many of our units actively utilize Academic Analytics as a faculty development tool – both for individual faculty and for departments, programs, and centers/institutes.

Academic Analytics' data, information, and tools are most appropriately utilized to start and facilitate conversations rather than end them.

Principles of Use

- AcA data should never be the sole source of evidence and must be used in the context of other reliable sources of data and evidence. Therefore, a reference to AcA data should be accompanied by a reference to other sources of data or information.
- Access to AcA data requires individual training and user agreement to follow AcA-identified restrictions prior to being given access.
- Users are given access to the AcA comparative data dependent on the answer to the following question: "Does the individual have a demonstrated specific need to know?" In other words, does the individual maintain a level of authority or interest in the unit that would enable them to initiate improvements within the program? For example, a dean has managerial responsibility for all of the departments and programs in their school/college, while a department Chair has the administrative responsibility for only the programs in their department. Requests for individual access are made

through the Office of Decision Support, Director of Faculty Data Reporting and Analytics – Adam Caskie (FacultyHelp@usf.edu).

- Faculty will have access to view their data and reports through the Faculty Insight tool. They may tailor their interests catalog as desired and can use the tool for purposes such as **identifying relevant grant opportunities, identifying potential collaborators or external evaluators, locating relevant awards, and career planning.**
- The presence of a performance metric in the AcA Administrator Portal does not indicate that it is of more importance than many other types of performance indicators; additional performance indicators that are not publicly available are essential to understanding individual faculty achievement as well as unit performance
- USF is committed to working with AcA to provide accurate data and improve the comprehensiveness of the data included.

Constructive Uses of Academic Analytics by Academic Leaders

- Identifying current and aspirational peers
- Identifying faculty for honorific awards, with emphasis on those who may be under awarded based on their level of scholarship
- Analyzing department level strengths and weaknesses in relation to peer departments as part of divisional or departmental reviews and the Academic Program Review process
- Benchmarking units against peers to draw attention to USF excellence
- Identifying and promoting interdisciplinary scholarly networks at USF
- Making academic planning decisions
- Locating underused extramural grants and funding areas relative to peers
- Identifying external reviewers for program reviews, tenure & promotion, and other similar needs
- Identifying prospective faculty recruits
- Retention considerations

Academic Analytics Data Should Not Be Used:

- To determine individual faculty evaluations
- To determine salary or merit increases
- To make promotion, tenure, or post-tenure decisions
- To share information about individual faculty with those who do not have access

I have read the statement of best practice and agree to abide by the principles shared within.

Name

Signature

Date signed